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JOINT TASK FORCE ON USDA-STATE DEPARTMENT'S OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Talk by S. R. Newell, Executive Director
at NAMO Spring Meeting, Washington, D. C., April 3, 1963

On December 28, 1962, Secretary Freeman named a Task Force on Federal-State relations in agriculture. The Task Force is composed of 10 members--5 Commissioners of Agriculture and 5 representatives of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and I was named as Executive Director of the Task Force. The purpose of this group is to explore ways to improve and expand areas of cooperation between the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the agriculture departments of the States. The Task Force is the result of a proposal presented by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, and accepted by Secretary Freeman in a speech before the Annual Convention of that association at Grand Rapids, Michigan on September 25, 1962. In his announcement establishing the Task Force Secretary Freeman said, "It is in the public interest that whenever feasible Federal and State laws be administered so as to avoid duplication of functions, facilities, and personnel, and to attain close coordination and maximum effectiveness and economy."

In its first organizational meeting the Task Force set forth its objective as follows: "To develop specific guidelines for the highest possible degree of State-Federal cooperation, coordination, and implementation of functions and services in areas of mutual concern in order to obtain maximum effectiveness and economy."

This, gentlemen, you will recognize as a very broad charter. It is going to require some time to conduct the basic studies that will be necessary to set up meaningful guidelines and principles on which to base further development of the cooperative programs. The Secretary has stated very clearly that the policy of the Department is to continue and improve the cooperative programs that have already been developed and to expand into new and additional areas wherever feasible.

I don't know how many of you realize the extent of the cooperative programs the State and Federal Departments have developed. I doubt very much if many of you realize how long some of these activities have been in existence. I know you will not believe that a young sprite like me has had some contact with this work for just short of 40 years, but it is a fact. I paid my first dollar for an associate membership in the NAMO in 1924, just about 39 years ago. I am tempted, but I will not impose on your time, to reminisce on the good old days of F. B. Bomberger, Neal Rhodes, Sr., Charlie White, Joe Meek, Web Birdsall, Louie Webster, Spense Duncan and many other oldtime members of this Association. Nor will take time to go into fond memories of such men as C. W. Kitchen, Pop Sherman, Roy Potts, Ray Pailthorp, Bert Boree, Bert Conklin and many other former members of the U. S. Department who were active in NAMO. It is enough to say here that your organization has a long history of cooperative work with each other and the USDA. It is a good record and one in which you can be justly proud. But this is but a part of the whole program, with which the Task Force must be concerned. Let me touch a few high points to give you a little background.

Federal-State cooperation goes back to the beginnings of the Department. In fact, it goes back even before that. The States are responsible for the establishment of the Department in the first place. George Washington, in 1796, recommended the establishment of a Bureau of Agriculture in the Federal Government. He had the same luck some of us have had in more recent years when making recommendations for legislation; Congress didn't act on his proposal. In 1839 President Van Buren proposed the establishment of a department, and again Congress did not act, but his interest probably had an influence in getting some agricultural statistics in the Census of 1840 and probably encouraged Congress to make an appropriation of \$1,000 in the 1939 Appropriation Act, authorizing the Patent Office to collect statistics and distribute seed. This came about because of the long-time agitation by the States and the State Agricultural Societies for help in the development of a national program for agriculture. This really is the beginning of the USDA. In passing, I might add that the first crop report was issued in 1841, and this is significant here because this was really the original and basic marketing service. It was the reason for including this function as one of the duties of

the Secretary in the Organic Act of 1862. Furthermore, it was out of this activity that many of the marketing services we now have, developed.

But time is running out. Let's skip a few decades and move to 1884. This is a significant year because Congress in passing the Act of May 29, 1884, providing for investigation into pleuro-pneumonia and other diseases of cattle it also provided specifically for cooperation with the States in carrying out the provisions of that act. Definite regulations for cooperation were set up. I believe this marks the earliest step in the development of formal cooperation with the State departments. That program we now call "Animal Disease Control and Eradication," still on a cooperative basis. Next came the Plant Quarantine Act, passed in 1912. Although informal working relations had been developed with the States prior to the passage of the Plant Quarantine Act, this was the beginning of formal relations on the cooperative program on "Plant Pest Control."

Jumping along pretty rapidly, we come to 1914, when the Crop and Livestock Estimating Service that was started on a continuing basis in 1866, was reorganized (Yes, we reorganization even back in those days). The old statistical agent setup that had been started in 1882 was abolished, and a system of full-time State Statisticians was introduced. Almost immediately these new State Statisticians began to discuss with the State departments the possibilities of joint working relations. This culminated the first formal cooperative agreement on crop and livestock estimates in 1917 between the Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture and USDA.

The Bureau of Markets was established in 1913. Almost immediately thought was given to the possibility of a market news service and grades and standards. George K. Holmes, a member of the Crop and Livestock Estimating staff, was one of the first to write on the subject. Dr. Holmes in discussing the feasibility of a market news service, decided that this might be a very dangerous project; furthermore, it could not be handled for less than a million dollars a year, and in those days a million dollars was just out of the question. Another of his articles appearing in one of the old Yearbooks was entitled, "Consumers' Fancies." To me this was a rather interesting article because Dr. Holmes certainly put his finger on some of the problems that are involved in setting up uniform and meaningful quality standards--particularly for fruits and vegetables.

Brief mention should be made regarding the Marketing Act of 1946 (Title II of the so-called "Research and Marketing Act"). I regard this as a milestone in the long history of the development of marketing services and regulatory activities, in which this Association is primarily interested. There had never before been any specific legislation providing for direct aid to the State departments of agriculture for their marketing work. Many of the State departments and their Bureaus of Markets, in particular, had found it difficult to keep abreast of the growing demand for the various marketing services most of which had developed in cooperation with USDA. The State departments argued for a number of years that since marketing was in considerable part a national problem and that the producer was not the sole beneficiary of improved quality and more efficient marketing, some national assistance was justified.

The State Bureaus of Markets had experienced varying amounts of pressure from their Extension Services and others for assistance in explaining and demonstrating quality grades of commodities to the producers. The Extension Services and Experiment Stations were also heavy users of the statistics developed by the Crop Reporting Service and there was and still is constant pressure for more accurate and more detailed statistics to assist in formulating programs and measuring results of their research and educational work.

I cannot go into detail on the development of this legislation, but I should point out that the Marketing Act of 1946, Title II of Public Law 733 as it was finally enacted, covered a very wide range of programs. The current appropriation for that part of the bill providing for the marketing services and regulatory work, is only about \$1,425,000, which is not nearly as much as would be authorized by the original legislation.

Now let's turn quickly to some brief statistics that will give an idea of the magnitude and complexity of this whole big program with which we are dealing. In summary, there are 46 different programs that are conducted cooperatively between the State Departments of agriculture and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. There are eight separate programs in the field of animal disease control and eradication. Plant pest control work is covered in 18 different programs. In the field of marketing there are 18 different areas, and in the field of agricultural statistics there are 2 programs. It is difficult to arrive at a definite dollar figure, but I would say that these 46 programs would involve well over \$100 million a year. So you see this little program that was born back there in the 1880's has really grown up to be quite a sizable job.

Now, gentlemen, my purpose in giving you this very brief and rather sketchy summary is, first of all, to provide you with some idea of the magnitude and complexity of the job that confronts the Task Force. But I have another reason, too, and that is to help you to appreciate the significance of the tremendous job you are doing in the marketing field and the fact that it is a part of a very big program involving other fields of work in which, whether you recognize it or not, you have an interest. Yours is an extremely important job, and it can only increase in importance. You can be proud of the work your predecessors have done; you can be proud of the job you are now doing. But this is no time to rest on your laurels. Agriculture is dynamic and is changing rapidly. You must not only keep up with the changes; you must lead this big field of work. Before I quit, let me emphasize one or two points that I think are most important.

You are key officials in your States. You have the responsibility for carrying out specific jobs from day to day, month to month, and year to year. The work you are doing is much more than just reporting a market or grading a carload of potatoes. What you do has an important impact in our economy. In carrying out this current workload let me urge that you keep in mind that it is also a very large and important program. Your work in your individual states is much more valuable when it is effectively coordinated with the work in other States and the Nation. I realize that it is quite elementary to make such a statement to this group, but, on the other hand, I have seen this elementary fact overlooked so often when the pressure of the current job increases, I don't think it hurts to emphasize it again.

Another point I would like to urge each of you to keep uppermost in your mind is that as an administrator, one of your very important responsibilities is to develop men. To my mind, one of the marks of a successful administrator is the way in which he develops men and women that can do a better job when he must ultimately hang up his spurs. This means raising the standards of the men you put on the job, provide good training opportunities and opportunities to progress within the service. In recent years as I have looked over young men as prospects for a job it has often occurred to me that I wouldn't hire a man who didn't have better qualifications for the job than I had when I was hired back in the twenties. In other words, a good administrator is looking for the kind of man who has the potential for coming up and taking over his job some of these days.

Now I want to compliment this Association for a job that you did in analyzing the organizational and administrative setup of the marketing work in the State departments of agriculture. I heard Don Wilkinson make a very good report on this study to the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture several years ago. I have recently had occasion to look at those charts again. This is the kind of broad viewpoint and thinking that I think is ultimately bound to bear some good fruit. I would certainly urge the Association to set up more joint projects on other broad subjects.

In closing, I must say that I cannot give you any timetable on the work of the Task Force. I know that there is a great deal to be done, and it will certainly require all the time that has been allotted to us, this project stops December 31, 1963, and possibly some more if we reach our objective. The Task Force can't do it all, we will also need your full and understanding cooperation in providing information and assistance in analyzing and working out the solution to many knotty problems that I can see in the offing.

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